

# Physical Education

Framework

NCCA

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta  
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment



SENIOR CYCLE  
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# 1

## Senior cycle

Learners in senior cycle are approaching the end of their time in school and are focusing on the directions they would like to take in their future lives. Senior cycle plays a vital role in helping learners to address their current needs as young adults and in preparing them for life in a changing economic and social context.

Senior cycle is founded on a commitment to educational achievement of the highest standard for all learners, commensurate with their individual abilities. To support learners as they shape their own future there is an emphasis on the development of knowledge and deep understanding, on learners taking responsibility for their own learning, on the acquisition of key skills, and on the processes of learning. The broad curriculum, with some opportunities for specialisation, supports continuity from junior cycle and sets out to meet the needs of learners, some of whom have special educational needs, but who all share a wide range of learning interests, aptitudes and talents.

Curriculum components at senior cycle promote a balance between knowledge and skills, and the kinds of learning strategies relevant to participation in, and contribution to, a changing world where the future is uncertain.

Assessment in senior cycle involves gathering, interpreting and using information about the processes and outcomes of learning. It takes different forms and is used for a variety of purposes. It is used to determine the appropriate route for learners through a differentiated curriculum, to identify specific areas of difficulty or strength for a given student and to test and certify achievement. Assessment supports and improves learning by helping learners and teachers to identify next steps in the teaching and learning process.

## The experience of senior cycle

The vision of senior cycle sees the learner at the centre of the educational experience. That experience will enable learners to be resourceful, to be confident, and to participate actively in society, to build an interest in learning and develop an ability to learn throughout their lives.

This vision of the learner is underpinned by the values on which senior cycle is based and it is realised through the principles that inform the curriculum as it is experienced by learners in schools. The curriculum, made up of subjects and courses, embedded key skills, clearly expressed learning outcomes, and supported by a range of approaches to assessment, is the vehicle through which the vision becomes a reality for the learner.

At a practical level, the provision of a high-quality educational experience in senior cycle is supported by:

- effective curriculum planning, development, organisation and evaluation
- teaching and learning approaches that motivate and interest learners, that enable them to progress, that deepen and apply their learning, and that develop their capacity to reflect on their learning
- professional development for teachers and school management that enables them to lead curriculum development and change in their schools
- a school culture that respects learners, that encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning over time, and that promotes a love of learning.

Senior cycle education is situated in the context of a broader education policy that focuses on the contribution that education can make to the development of the learner as a person and as a citizen, and that emphasises the promotion of social cohesion, the growth of society and the economy, and the principle of sustainability in all aspects of development.

Figure 1: Overview of senior cycle

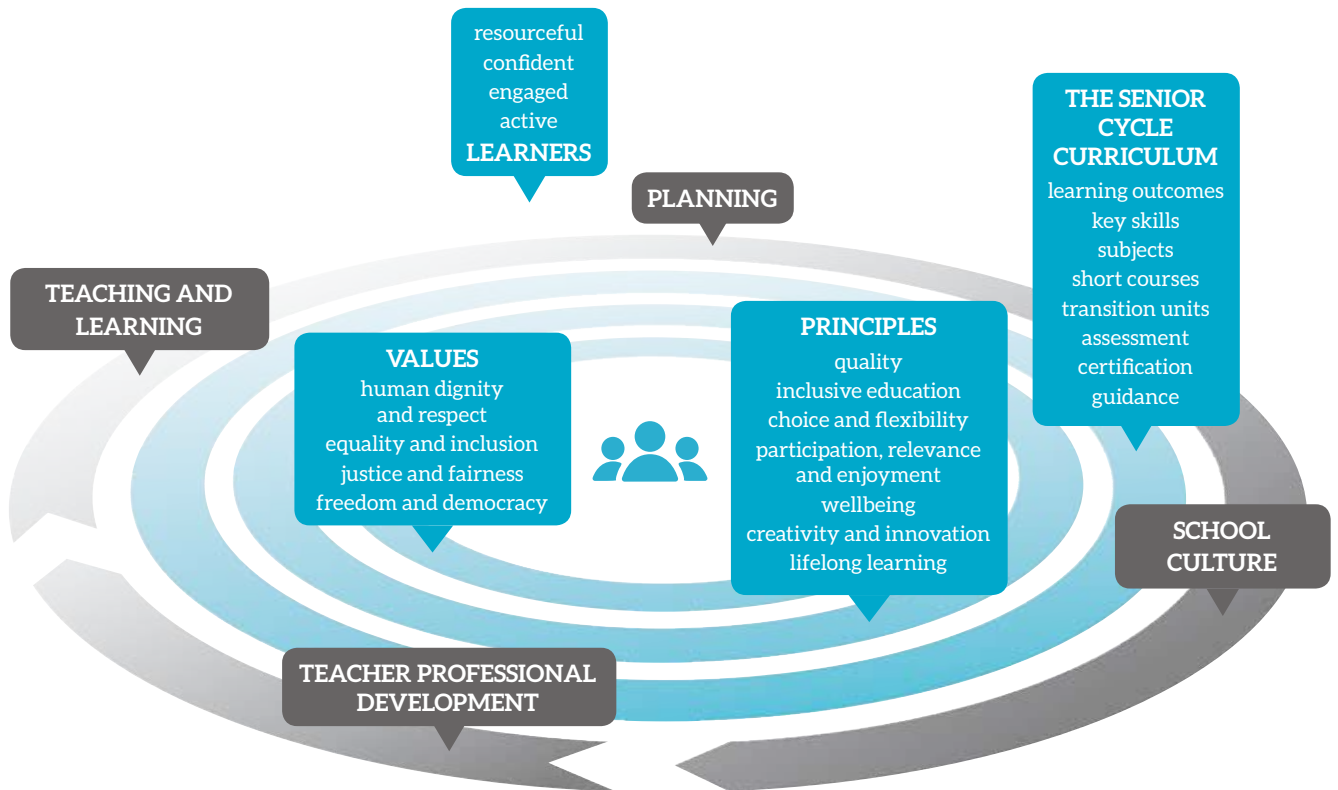


Figure 2: Vision of senior cycle



# 2

## Senior cycle physical education

### Introduction

Physical education is an integral part of young people's education in senior cycle. As a result of their learning in physical education, young people can increase their enjoyment, confidence and competence in a range of physical activities. They can learn about health-related fitness and to take responsibility for being physically active now and in the future. Overall, they can develop positive attitudes to physical activity and its importance in a healthy and fulfilling lifestyle.

As part of senior cycle education, it is envisaged that physical education will be available in two forms. Leaving Certificate Physical Education as a subject which will be assessed as part of the Leaving Certificate examinations is under development. The senior cycle physical education (SCPE) framework has a different purpose and focus. It provides a flexible planning tool for physical education for all students in senior cycle and will not be assessed as part of the Leaving Certificate examination.

Young people in this group bring a wide variety of skills, talents and levels of motivation to their learning in physical education. They are represented at all points of the physical activity continuum. Some young people are regularly active and/or participate at a very high level of performance. However, there are others who are not meeting the physical activity recommendations for young people (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2015).

Students' learning in physical education supports the overall vision of senior cycle education which is to develop students as resourceful, confident, engaged and active learners. Learners grow in confidence and competence as they acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to enjoy and succeed in a variety of physical activities while in senior cycle and in their future lives. Physical activity, in its many forms, provides the medium through which students learn in, through and about physical education.

Learners can experience success in different ways in physical education. For some, the pursuit of excellence and the achievement of sporting goals will be the focus. For some, organising, leading and facilitating others to be physically active will be the measure of success. For others, including regular physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle will represent a successful outcome.

The use of different curriculum models in conjunction with those physical activities selected by a class group and their teacher is at the heart of teaching and learning in SCPE. By using different curriculum models, learners can be encouraged not only to improve their performance in different physical activities but also to develop their understanding of the factors which impact on their personal performance and participation in physical activity.

Learners can be encouraged to undertake different roles and responsibilities, including leadership, coaching and officiating roles. They can learn to plan, organise, participate in and reflect on their experiences in physical activity. Students can learn about fair play, team work and how to relate to one another respectfully. As a result, they learn to be effective in the different competitive, creative and challenging situations that participation in physical activity continually offers them.



## SCPE and wellbeing

In this course, students can learn about the importance of being physically active as part of a healthy lifestyle. Learners in senior cycle are at an important stage in their lives where they make their own decisions on whether or how they will include physical activity as part of their lifestyle. Learning in senior cycle physical education is designed to ensure that students appreciate the importance of physical activity not only for their physical wellbeing but also their social and psychological wellbeing. Regular physical activity is universally accepted as being central to overall health and wellbeing. The recommended level of physical activity for young people is at least sixty minutes of moderate intensity activity each day of the week (CDC, 2010).

The school is a key setting and young people a major target in strategies to promote health-enhancing levels of physical activity for all. Physical education has an important contribution to make in supporting young people to discover ways in which they can enjoy and commit to regular physical activity. As a result of their learning in senior cycle physical education, students should have a greater sense of their own agency and commitment to regular health-enhancing physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle. This can be achieved where students are engaged in collaborative planning with their teacher about which activities they will participate in and what learning outcomes they will focus on.

## Aim and objectives

### Aim

The aim of the senior cycle physical education framework is to encourage learners' confident, enjoyable and informed participation in physical activity while in senior cycle and in their future lives.

### Objectives

The objectives of senior cycle physical education are to support learners in

- developing confidence, competence and creativity in a range of physical activities
- participating in physical activity both inside and beyond school
- examining the value of physical activity in different contexts
- understanding and committing to physical activity which develops health-related physical fitness
- undertaking different roles in physical activity
- demonstrating responsible social and personal behaviour in physical activity, including respect for self and others
- acting as informed participants in physical activity.

## Inclusion

Senior cycle physical education is designed to encourage learners' active participation in physical education irrespective of their level of ability and/or commitment to physical activity. The flexible nature of the framework facilitates learners in achieving goals that are meaningful and relevant to them.

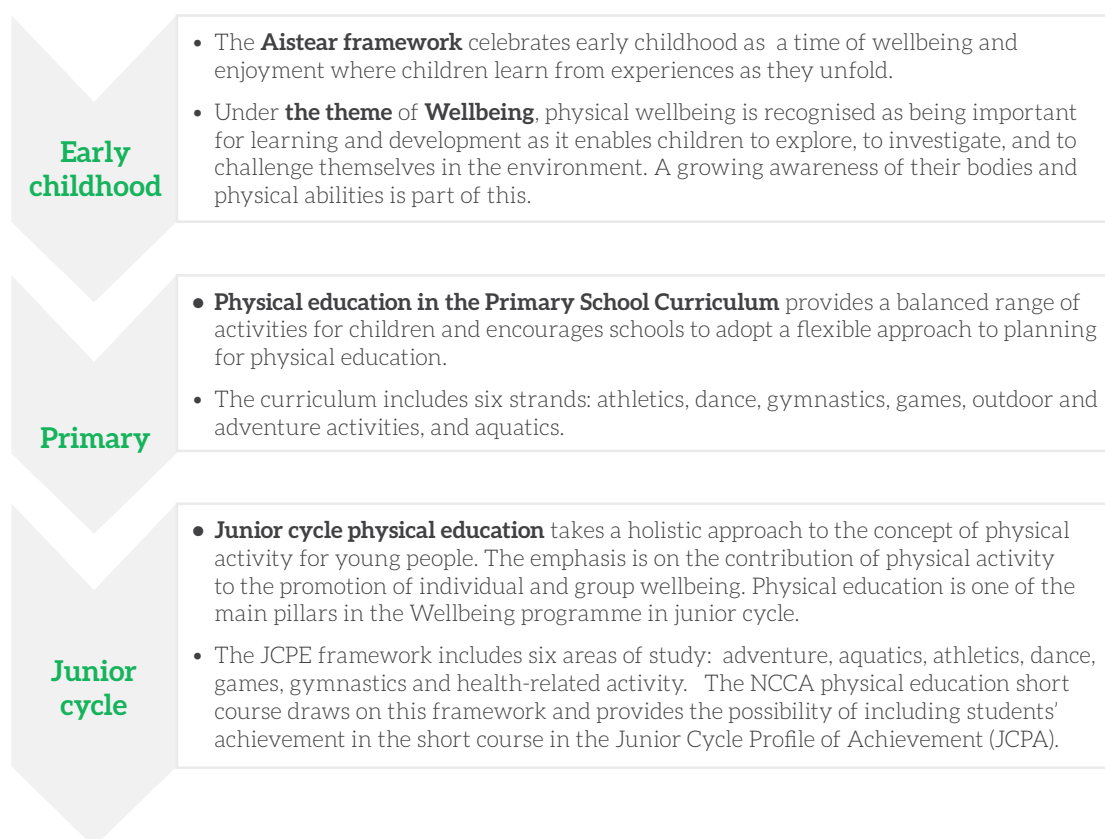
In SCPE, specific physical activities are not the primary focus when planning for teaching and learning. Rather, they provide the medium through which students learn in physical education. Teachers are encouraged to negotiate which physical activities are included so that learning in class is meaningful and of interest.

The differentiated use of a variety of learning approaches and the modification of equipment, including adapted and/or assistive equipment, are central to creating and maintaining an inclusive learning environment in physical education.

## Related learning

The framework for senior cycle physical education provides continuity and progression in physical education that begins in the learner's early childhood education, through the Primary School Curriculum and junior cycle physical education.

**Figure 3: Continuity and related learning in senior cycle physical education**



## Physical education and lifelong learning

The framework for senior cycle physical education provides opportunities for learners to prepare for further study in a range of areas, for example in the teaching, coaching and healthcare professions. In addition to its vocational value, students' learning in physical education provides them with knowledge, skills and understanding that will support lifelong informed participation and/or the pursuit of excellence in their own sporting and physical activity pursuits. There is a substantial body of research which identifies the lifelong benefits of regular participation in physical activity for health and wellbeing (C3 Collaborating for Health, 2011).

The emphasis on the development of key skills in the SCPE framework will support learners' effective engagement in a variety of further education opportunities where self-direction, leadership, organisational skills and reflection are important.

The SCPE framework has the potential to make a significant contribution to enhancing learners' commitment to lifelong participation in physical activity. Learners can be encouraged to explore physical activity opportunities within and beyond the school. As they do so, they can become informed participants in physical activity as they reflect on the community and societal factors that support or hinder lifelong participation in physical activity. Learners can be encouraged to act as advocates for physical activity, both by their personal example and in their contribution to the various initiatives in sport and physical activity, in school and in the community.

# 3

## The framework

### Structure

The framework for senior cycle physical education is structured around six curriculum models. Curriculum models are theme-based and reflect a specific philosophy about what is most important in physical education. Each model provides a detailed map for decision-making about teaching and learning. This map focuses on a detailed approach, including a rationale, planning, implementation and assessment functions. The learner is the central consideration when planning using the models with due regard to the resources available in the school. While each model provides a unique set of learning experiences, it is up to the physical education teacher to decide which models will be included in their physical education curriculum in senior cycle. As teachers build their familiarity with the models, it is envisaged that a greater range of models will be included.

### The six curriculum models are as follows:

#### **Health-related physical activity**

developing learners' understanding of health-related physical activity for now and in the future.

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#### **Sport education**

providing learners with an enjoyable and authentic experience of organised physical activity as they learn to perform playing and non-playing roles.

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#### **Contemporary issues in physical activity**

encouraging learners to critically reflect on their own and others' experiences in physical activity and sport.

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#### **Adventure education**

encouraging learners to challenge themselves and co-operate with others as they learn to solve physical activity challenges.

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#### **Personal and social responsibility**

encouraging learners to take responsibility for themselves and their learning in physical education class including respecting the rights and feelings of others.

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#### **Teaching games for understanding**

developing learners' tactical awareness and decision-making skills in a variety of games.

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The unique characteristics of a curriculum model are referred to as the core elements. These core elements include the content and the teaching strategies that are seen as being central to providing learners with an authentic and worthwhile experience of a particular model.

Each model can be used as 'stand-alone' or combined with other models. In some instances, a teacher may choose to use a combination of two models in order to ensure that learners are physically active whilst also being involved in learning about physical activity, an example being the frequent use of Contemporary issues in physical activity with Sport education.

Once the curriculum model or combination of models has been selected, the appropriate teaching strategies to guide instruction and facilitate learning for all students in the class are identified. Some curriculum models are linked directly to particular teaching strategies which support learners in achieving the intended learning outcomes.

Senior cycle physical education is planned in blocks of work. The physical education teacher decides which model or combinations of models will be the focus in each block of work. They then, in consultation with students, select the learning outcomes that will be addressed. While it is not envisaged that all learning outcomes will be included, the selected learning outcomes should prioritise learning in the essential elements outlined in each of the models. It is important that learners have sufficient time and experience of the particular model(s) being studied to fully benefit from the different teaching and learning experiences provided by it. It is recommended that not less than three and not more than five blocks of work should be included in each year of senior cycle physical education.

Planning for each block of work can be framed in relation to the following questions:

- Which objectives of senior cycle physical education are to be addressed in this block of work?
- Which curriculum model(s) can best support the achievement of these objectives?
- Which learning outcomes in the model(s) will be addressed in this block of work?
- Which of the physical activities that will engage students will work well with this curriculum model?
- Which teaching strategies can best enable learners to be successful in achieving these learning outcomes?
- What evidence of learning could students provide during, and/or at the completion of, the block of work? This evidence can be stored in the portfolio.

The framework is designed to provide a flexible collaborative approach to planning for physical education in senior cycle. The importance of planning within the unique context of each school is recognised here. School settings, facilities, personnel, expertise, the characteristics of the particular class and learners' interests are all significant considerations in the selection and sequencing of appropriate learning outcomes and approaches to assessment. A double period per week is required to support this learning. Tables 1 and 2 below provide an overview of two sample programmes in senior cycle physical education.

Transition Year physical education can be planned exclusively using the framework for senior cycle physical education. Alternatively, there are a number of transition units designed for physical education, for example, sports coaching, which may be used in conjunction with the framework.

Teachers are also encouraged to design their own transition units. Guidelines for the design of such units are available at [www.ncca.ie/SeniorCycle](http://www.ncca.ie/SeniorCycle).

The following are examples of what a two-year or a three-year plan for senior cycle physical education might include.

**Table 1: Two-year planning for senior cycle physical education**

Year	Blocks of work		
	A	B	C
1	Teaching games for understanding	Sport education and Contemporary issues in physical activity	Adventure education
2	Health-related physical activity	Sport education and Personal and social responsibility (Combined)	Contemporary issues in physical activity and Adventure education (Combined)

**Table 2: Three-year planning for senior cycle physical education**

Year	Blocks of work			
	A	B	C	D
1	Sport education	Health-related physical activity	Physical education transition unit	Personal and social responsibility
2	Teaching games for understanding and Personal and social responsibility	Sport education and Contemporary issues in physical activity		Adventure education
3	Health-related physical activity	Sport education		Contemporary issues in physical activity and Adventure education

## Which physical activities?

The choice of physical activity is important for learners' successful and enjoyable experiences in physical education. The main criteria for the selection of an activity are that learners are interested in the activity, the school can facilitate it, the selected learning outcomes can be addressed through the activity and it is possible to assess students' learning.

For example, tag rugby could be used in conjunction with five of the six curriculum models. Students could learn about Health-related physical activity, Personal and social responsibility, Contemporary issues in physical activity, Teaching games for understanding, and Sport education through the medium of tag rugby. In another example, dance could be used in conjunction with the following models: Health-related physical activity, Personal and social responsibility, Contemporary issues in physical activity, and Sport education.

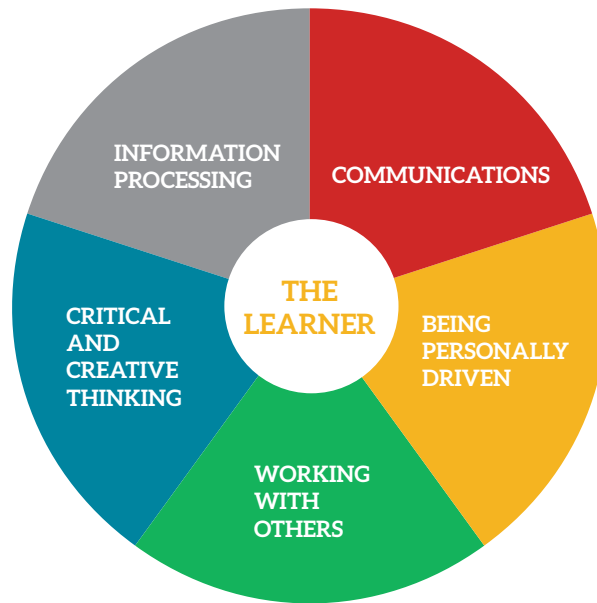
The selection of physical activities should be decided in consultation with learners to ensure that they are based on what is perceived by learners to be important and worthwhile. Selected activities are then given adequate physical education class time for learners to develop confidence and competence in some and mastery in a few. The underlying belief is that learners' in-depth and enjoyable learning in one activity will encourage them to participate in other similar activities. It is envisaged that a range of physical activities will be included in order to ensure breadth and balance in the programme and that the needs and interests of all learners are catered for.

## Time allocation

Senior cycle physical education is designed to be taught over the two or three years of senior cycle education. It is recommended that a double period per week is made available as the minimum requirement for teaching senior cycle physical education. Where possible, timetable arrangements should facilitate learning opportunities associated with physical education in practical settings beyond the school.

## Key skills in senior cycle

Figure 4: The five key skills of senior cycle



There are five key skills identified as being central to teaching and learning in senior cycle education. These are *information processing*, *being personally effective*, *communicating*, *critical and creative thinking* and *working with others*. Physical education provides a unique opportunity for learners to develop the key skills through learning in the psychomotor domain.

Learning outcomes in senior cycle physical education are clear statements of what it is expected that learners will achieve in terms of knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes. Each of the key skills is embedded in the learning outcomes in senior cycle physical education. For example, skills relating to being personally effective, communicating, and working with others are clearly articulated in the learning outcomes in the Personal and social responsibility curriculum model. Critical and creative thinking skills are central to learning outcomes that include compositional tasks, for example, in dance or gymnastics in Sport education, or the design of new games as might be required in the Teaching games for understanding curricular model.

The use of a range of teaching and learning strategies makes it possible not only to meet the different learning needs of students but also allows the key skills to be developed. For example:

- Communication skills can be developed by involving learners in group or partner-based problem-solving tasks.
- Developing and maintaining good relationships is central to the key skill of working with others. Opportunities to develop this skill arises frequently in physical activity participation and/or competition.
- Being personally effective includes the ability to reflect on one's own performance in different physical activities and to plan for improvement. Each of the models provides particular perspectives for learners about themselves as participants in physical activity.



The well-planned use of learning outcomes will enable teachers to support the development of the key skills and to assess learners' progress in them. As teachers observe learners engaging in the different learning experiences, they can use these opportunities to provide formative feedback to learners about their use of key skills.

## Teaching and learning in SCPE

The unique contribution of physical education to learning in the psychomotor domain is the central consideration in planning for teaching and learning. The emphasis is always on learners being physically active, thereby helping them to develop their psychomotor skills across a variety of physical activities.

In senior cycle physical education, learners are encouraged to be actively involved in all aspects of their learning. A wide range of participatory and enquiry-based learning approaches can be used to achieve this. These include learners undertaking playing and non-playing roles, applying theoretical knowledge and understanding to practical performance, engaging in class discussions and debates and reflecting on their own and others' performances and participation in physical activities. Learning activities can be selected in consultation with students to ensure that they experience a broad and balanced programme and that the activities are enjoyable and worthwhile for them. Learners will collect evidence of their learning in a portfolio throughout senior cycle.

### **Differentiated learning in physical education**

The flexible nature of the framework for senior cycle physical education facilitates learners in achieving goals that are worthwhile for them. The use of a variety of teaching and learning approaches ensures that students' different learning needs can be catered for. Assessment approaches should, in turn, facilitate learners responding to similar tasks in different ways.

### **Information and Communications Technology (ICT)**

ICT has a significant contribution to make to learning in physical education. Increasingly there are affordable, user-friendly and portable digital tools available to support teaching, learning and assessment in physical education. For example, learners can use apps to goal set, to track their physical activity levels, to capture their performances and to analyse them. They can use ICT to make presentations, develop graphics, concept maps and databases about their learning and performance in physical education. Students can also learn to use ICT in an ethical and responsible manner as an integral part of their learning in physical education class.

# 4

## Curriculum models

### Health-related physical activity

Health-related physical activity (HRPA) aims to develop learners' understanding of health-related physical activity. HRPA is a concepts-based model which aims to build on learners' knowledge, skills and understanding of this area from junior cycle physical education. Through participation in a range of physical activities, students learn how to develop their health-related physical fitness and about the related concepts. HRPA also aims to build an appreciation of the importance of participation in lifelong physical activity.

The essential elements of Health-related physical activity are as follows:

Study of concepts—students learn about fitness and health and wellness concepts and practices.

Lifetime physical activities—learners participate in lifetime physical activities.

Physical activity and wellness appreciation—learners consider the importance of developing and maintaining adequate levels of physical activity and good nutritional practices.

Personal activity programme planning—learners develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to plan and execute personal activity programmes.

The objectives of senior cycle physical education addressed in HRPA are to support learners in

- understanding and committing to physical activity which develops health-related physical fitness
- participating in physical activity both inside and beyond the school
- acting as informed participants in physical activity
- examining the value of physical activity in different contexts.

The following table sets out the content and the learning outcomes for Health-related physical activity. Learners in consultation with their teachers can select the learning outcomes that they wish to focus on in this model, with due regard to the resources available in the school.

## Health-related physical activity

<i>Students learn about</i>	<i>Students should be able to</i>
Health-related and performance-related physical fitness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. evaluate their own health-related physical fitness</li> <li>2. compare the components of health-related and performance-related physical fitness</li> <li>3. monitor their participation in activities designed to enhance one or more health-related fitness components using the FITT formula (Frequency, Intensity, Time and Type)</li> </ol>
Physical activity participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. discuss the benefits of regular physical activity that they have experienced as a result of their participation</li> <li>5. identify different supports that helped them begin and/or continue to be physically active</li> <li>6. create a personal activity profile identifying abilities, attitudes, motivations and barriers to their own participation following a self-assessment</li> <li>7. use a range of strategies to overcome barriers to regular participation in physical activity</li> <li>8. identify physical activity opportunities in school and in their communities</li> </ol>
Designing a physical activity programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. identify reliable resources to support their planning of a health-related and/or performance-related physical fitness programme</li> <li>10. use their personal physical fitness results to plan and implement an effective, enjoyable and balanced fitness programme which aims to improve health-related/ performance-related physical fitness</li> <li>11. plan a physical activity programme designed to enhance health-related physical fitness for an individual with an activity profile different to their own</li> </ol>
Organising a physical activity event	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. organise a health-related physical activity event</li> <li>13. participate in and reflect on the health-related physical activity event</li> </ol>
Evaluation of physical activity facilities, services and products	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. evaluate a local health club/gym or physical activity facility or fitness service from a number of perspectives including that of a participant</li> </ol>
Safety concerns pertaining to a variety of lifetime and fitness activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. provide advice about appropriate clothing, hydration, safe practice and suitable equipment for health-related physical activities based on their experience</li> <li>16. document the uses and misuse of supplements/drugs in physical activity and sport</li> </ol>
Wellbeing/Wellness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. include physical activity in their stress management plan</li> <li>18. practise relaxation techniques</li> <li>19. evaluate personal diet and nutrition habits</li> <li>20. commit to a healthy, balanced eating plan which they have designed to meet the energy and nutritional demands of their physical activity levels</li> </ol>

## Sport education

Sport education aims to contribute to the development of learners as competent, literate and enthusiastic players and participants in a range of physical activities. This is achieved by providing learners with an authentic experience of sport and organised physical activity where they learn to perform playing and non-playing roles such as participant/player, referee, coach, choreographer, and statistician. By focusing teaching and learning on a more complete experience of the activity, each learner is more likely to develop a broad set of skills and to become familiar with the strategies necessary to participate in sport and organised physical activity successfully now and in adulthood.

In Sport education, sport is understood as being

*...all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels. (Council of Europe, 2001)*

### The essential elements of Sport education are as follows:

#### Seasons

learners experience the activity in a season in which they practise the skills, techniques and/or compositional elements of the selected activity and participate in formal competition or performance.

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#### Affiliation

learners are affiliated to teams/troupes/squads/groups working toward a common goal.

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#### Formal competition

each season includes opportunities for participation in formal competition or performance.

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#### Keeping records

learners engage in record-keeping about different aspects of their participation and performance.

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#### Culminating event

at the end of each season, an event is organised to mark the end of the season and recognise excellence and effort.

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#### Festivity

Sport education aims to include the festivity, colour and excitement associated with the chosen activity (team colours, chants, flags, costumes and pictures).

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The objectives of senior cycle physical education addressed in Sport education are to support learners in

- developing confidence, competence and creativity in a range of physical activities
- undertaking different roles in physical activity
- participating in physical activity both inside and beyond the school
- demonstrating responsible social and personal behaviour in physical activity, including respect for self and others
- acting as informed participants in physical activity.

The following table sets out the content and the learning outcomes for Sport education. Learners in consultation with their teachers can select the learning outcomes that they wish to focus on in this model, with due regard to the resources available in the school.

### Sport education

<i>Students learn about</i>	<i>Students should be able to</i>
Roles and responsibilities	1. undertake different playing and non-playing roles in the selected physical activity
Being an effective team member	2. participate as an effective member of a team working towards a common goal—for example, a culminating event, display, or performance 3. demonstrate effective leadership in playing and non-playing roles
Effective personal performance	4. demonstrate the effective use of the skills, techniques and strategies of the activity 5. observe the rituals and conventions of the activity 6. adhere to the safety requirements of the activity 7. develop the fitness requirements for the selected physical activity 8. incorporate a variety of techniques, choreographic principles and approaches to group work in their dance/gymnastic performance 9. demonstrate an understanding of aesthetic and artistic considerations in their performance 10. work creatively with props in dance and small and large apparatus in gymnastics
Culminating physical activity event	11. organise a culminating event for the selected physical activity 12. reflect on their own experience of organising and participating in a culminating event from an individual and/or group perspective
Physical activity opportunities beyond the physical education class	12. organise a health-related physical activity event 13. participate in and reflect on the health-related physical activity event
Common sport injuries and their rehabilitation, first aid procedures including concussion and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).	14. show knowledge and understanding of common injuries in the chosen activity by including ways in which they can be avoided as they participate in the activity

## Contemporary issues in physical activity

Contemporary issues in physical activity aims to develop learners as informed and critical participants in physical activity and sport. Students learn not only to critically reflect on their personal experiences in physical activity and sport but also on the broader local, national and international influences on participation and provision. Learners are encouraged to consider physical activity and sport from personal, social and cultural perspectives.

**The essential elements of Contemporary issues in physical activity are as follows:**

### **Practical activity**

students learn about and participate in a specific activity, selected by the learners in consultation with the teacher.

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### **Critical reflection**

the selected physical activity provides the lens through which students learn about:

- Social issues—discussion and critique of contemporary issues in sport, health, and physical activity
  - Personal connections to physical activity, school, and society—the role and meaning of sport in their lives, and in the wider community in which they live.
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The objectives of senior cycle physical education addressed in Contemporary issues in physical activity are to support learners in

- examining the value of physical activity in different contexts
- demonstrating responsible social and personal behaviour in physical activity, including respect for self and others
- acting as informed participants in physical activity
- developing confidence, competence and creativity in a range of physical activities
- participating in physical activity both inside and beyond the school.

The following table sets out the content and the learning outcomes for Contemporary issues in physical activity. Learners in consultation with their teachers can select the learning outcomes that

they wish to focus on in this model, with due regard to the resources available in the school. These learning outcomes are more likely to be achieved when they are specifically applied to the sport or physical activity in which the learners are engaged during physical education.

### Contemporary issues in physical activity

<i>Students learn about</i>	<i>Students should be able to</i>
Different experiences of physical activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. review two or more physical activity biographies of individuals, including their own</li> <li>2. explain the role of family, friends, school and community in enhancing or inhibiting participation in physical activity</li> </ol>
Physical activity opportunities in and beyond school	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. critique opportunities for physical activity for students within and beyond the school</li> <li>4. show evidence of participating in a physical activity other than physical education class</li> <li>5. encourage others to participate in a physical activity of their choice</li> <li>6. highlight physical activity opportunities including mass participation events in their locality</li> </ol>
Barriers and supports in sport and physical activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. evaluate the supports and barriers, both actual and perceived, to different groups' participation in physical activity</li> <li>2. identify occasions and/or practices where sport and physical activity are used to either support or oppress different groups of males and females</li> <li>3. analyse the role of national and local policies in the promotion of physical activity and health</li> <li>4. explain the role of the Local Sports Partnership including how it supports young peoples' ongoing participation in physical activity</li> <li>5. develop a resource which highlights the work of a National Governing Body of Sport and/or other groups whose aim it is to promote physical activity participation</li> <li>6. critique facilities for physical activity in and beyond school from a number of perspectives, including safety, attractiveness, gender, age, and special needs</li> <li>7. advocate with the relevant bodies for the improvement of physical activity facilities/opportunities in their local community</li> </ol>
Inclusive physical activity opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. organise a physical activity event in their school/local community that is designed to be inclusive</li> <li>15. design a promotional campaign to highlight opportunities for inclusive physical activity in their community</li> </ol>
The influence of the media in physical activity and sport	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. critically analyse the role of the media in relation to physical activity participation for both males and females and/or minority groups</li> </ol>
Sport and drug use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. document the uses and misuse of supplements/drugs in the sport</li> <li>18. design a charter for safe participation in sporting activities</li> </ol>

## Adventure education

Adventure education aims to encourage learners to challenge themselves as they learn to co-operate with others, take appropriate risks, develop trust in themselves and in others, have due regard for their safety and solve physical activity challenges with others' help and guidance. Building on learning about adventure activities in junior cycle physical education, Adventure education includes a wide range of activities, including co-operative activities, trust activities and problem-solving initiatives. It also includes activities that occur in the outdoor environment such as hill-walking and orienteering. Each of the activities is based on one or more of the following concepts: challenge, co-operation, risk, trust and problem-solving.

Reflection is a central part of each activity, where learners not only reflect on the adventure activity experience but also consider how they might apply what they have learned in other authentic contexts in the future. The emphasis is on students learning about themselves and each other whilst engaging in the adventure activity rather than on the outcome of the activity.

**The essential elements of Adventure education are as follows:**

### **Experiential learning**

learners participate in the adventure activity, reflect on the experience, generalise their learning and apply it to new situations.

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### **Shared commitment**

brithar is the word used to describe how learners agree to be bound by a set of negotiated rules designed to encourage respectful and responsible personal and group behaviour.

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### **Challenge with choice**

learners choose how they participate in different adventure activities designed to challenge their physical, mental and emotional comfort levels.

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### **Opportunities to reflect on and process the experience**

this is necessary to support learners in making sense of what they have learnt.

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### **Outdoor element**

learners experience different adventure activities in the outdoors.

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### **Skill development**

learners develop the skills and techniques pertinent to a specific outdoor activity.

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### **Personal challenge**

learners view physical and mental challenges as an adventure to be experienced.

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### **Team challenge**

group members communicate effectively, cooperate and compromise with each other through trial and error participation in a graduated series of problem-solving activities.

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### **Element of risk**

students learn to trust their physical and emotional safety to others as they attempt activities that involve some physical or emotional risks.

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The objectives of senior cycle physical education addressed in Adventure education are to support learners in

- demonstrating responsible social and personal behaviour in physical activity, including respect for self and others
- developing confidence, competence and creativity in a range of physical activities
- undertaking different roles in physical activity
- acting as informed participants in physical activity
- participating in physical activity both inside and beyond the school.

The following table sets out the content and the learning outcomes for Adventure education. Learners in consultation with their teachers can select the learning outcomes that they wish to focus on in this model, with due regard to the resources available in the school.

### Adventure education

<i>Students learn about</i>	<i>Students should be able to</i>
Challenging individual and group adventure activities	1. participate in individual and group adventure activities which challenge them physically, mentally and/or emotionally
Setting goals	2. set realistic personal goals for challenges which include opportunities for co-operation, appropriate risk-taking, building trust and/or problem-solving
Co-operation in adventure tasks	3. contribute to problem-solving in group adventure activities 4. demonstrate an ability and willingness to adhere to an agreed protocol regarding their personal behaviour and their interactions with other group members
Reflection on learning experiences	5. reflect on the different adventure challenges, including consideration of how their learning might be applied in future challenges
Creating adventure activity challenges	6. develop their own adventure activity task(s) including organising them for another individual or group
Safety in adventure activities	7. adhere to the necessary safety precautions in adventure activity challenges 8. demonstrate basic emergency first aid for outdoor adventure settings
Environmental features	9. consider different environmental features when participating in adventure activities including landscape features, tide and weather variations
Undertaking an adventure activity expedition	10. undertake a short expedition combining independent planning, navigation and adventure pursuit
Roles and responsibilities in Adventure education	11. take responsibility for one or more roles in an adventure activity challenge 12. model the individual and team behaviours which contribute to team morale and effectiveness when participating in adventure activities
Benefits of adventure activity	13. discuss the benefits of adventure activities for health and wellbeing

## Personal and social responsibility

Personal and social responsibility aims to teach life skills through the medium of physical education. Developing personal and social responsibility is a central part of the education process and this model recognises the unique contribution that physical education can make in this area.

In physical education class, young people experience the challenges encountered in victory and defeat, success and failure, interpersonal conflict and intra-personal challenges. However, learners' personal and social development is not necessarily an automatic outcome of these experiences. In Personal and social responsibility, the specific goals of respect, effort, self-direction, helping others, leadership and applying learning beyond the physical education class are made explicit. These goals are pursued in an incremental fashion, starting with respect and effort and they may be the focus of the physical activity being experienced in physical education.

### The essential elements of Personal and social responsibility are as follows:

#### **Inclusion of all learners**

learners are engaged at a level appropriate to their interests, skills, and ability.

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#### **Listening to learner voice**

learners have voices that should be heard leading to a greater sense of ownership of class activities and interactions.

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#### **Letting learners practise making choices**

learners are provided with opportunities to make choices.

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#### **Allowing for reflection on choices made**

learners reflect on the consequence of decisions taken, both positive and negative.

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#### **Learner-centred approach**

learners feel valued and cared for regardless of the physical activity being taught.

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When using this model, the physical education teacher has as their primary focus the gradual empowerment of learners to take appropriate levels of personal and social responsibility, including respecting the rights and feelings of others.

The objectives of senior cycle physical education addressed in Personal and social responsibility are to support learners in

- demonstrating responsible social and personal behaviour in physical activity, and demonstrating respect for self and others
- developing confidence, competence and creativity in a range of physical activities
- undertaking different roles in physical activity
- acting as informed participants in physical activity.

The following table sets out the content and the learning outcomes for Personal and social responsibility. Learners in consultation with their teachers can select the learning outcomes that they wish to focus on in this model, with due regard to the resources available in the school.

### Personal and social responsibility

<i>Students learn about</i>	<i>Students should be able to</i>
Making and keeping agreements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. negotiate the goals for physical education class</li><li>2. express their opinions and suggestions clearly and respectfully</li><li>3. resolve differences in a peaceful and respectful manner</li></ol>
Effort and participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. progress individual and group goals for effort and participation in the selected physical activities</li></ol>
Self-control	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. demonstrate the ability to take responsibility for their behaviour, commitment and progress in physical education class</li></ol>
Self-direction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>6. set realistic and challenging goals for achievement in physical activity</li><li>7. lead different classroom activities such as warm-ups, practices and small-sided games/performances</li><li>8. reflect on their progress, including planning next steps</li></ol>
Respecting the rights and feelings of others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>9. participate in physical activity in an inclusive way, being mindful of the needs and feelings of others</li></ol>
Leadership	demonstrate qualities of effective leadership as they undertake leadership roles in the organisation of, and participation in, physical activity <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>11. demonstrate an ability to act responsibly when unsupervised</li></ol>
Applying what has been learnt to the wider context	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>12. plan to participate in physical activity outside of physical education class</li><li>13. apply their learning about taking personal and social responsibility beyond physical education class</li></ol>

## Teaching games for understanding

Teaching games for understanding (TGfU) is a problem-based approach to the teaching of games. The main aim of this curriculum model is to develop learners' tactical awareness and decision-making skills in a variety of games.

In TGfU, games are classified into four main categories:

- invasion games, such as gaelic football, soccer and hockey
- net/wall games, such as badminton and squash
- striking/fielding games, such as rounders and cricket
- target games, such as golf and bowling.

In TgfU, students learn that the principles of play involved in a game are directly comparable to other games within that same category. For example, the general principles of attack and defence appropriate to gaelic football also apply in soccer and basketball.

**The essential elements of Teaching games for understanding are as follows:**

### **Game play**

learners participate in a game modified to focus on a particular game problem.

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### **Game appreciation**

learners appreciate the game form as shaped by rules, game play modifications, and number of players.

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### **Tactical awareness**

learners develop the awareness of tactics needed to solve game problems.

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### **Making appropriate decisions**

learners decide what to do, when to do it, why to do it and how to do it.

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### **Skill practice**

learners practise to improve on-the-ball skills and off-the-ball movements.

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### **Performance**

students learn to perform using tactical awareness and assess their improvement.

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### **Games**

making is an important element of teaching and learning in TGfU. Learners have an opportunity to work with their peers in the design and refinement of a new game based on their knowledge and understanding of the tactics and principles of play that are effective in the game/games category being played in class.

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The objectives of senior cycle physical education addressed in TGfU are to support learners in

- developing confidence, competence and creativity in a range of physical activities
- participating in physical activity both inside and beyond the school
- undertaking different roles in physical activity.

The following table sets out the content and the learning outcomes for Teaching games for understanding. Learners in consultation with their teachers can select the learning outcomes that they wish to focus on in this model, with due regard to the resources available in the school.

### Teaching games for understanding

<i>Students learn about</i>	<i>Students should be able to</i>
Game appreciation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. outline the elements that give form to the selected game including rules, boundaries and scoring</li> <li>2. critique if and how the rules contribute to making a game enjoyable and challenging</li> <li>3. agree the 'important rules' that will be observed as they participate in the selected sport</li> </ol>
Tactics and principles of play in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• striking and fielding games</li> <li>• net/wall games</li> <li>• invasion games</li> </ul> (Offensive and defensive play)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. set up an appropriate attacking play, either themselves or as a supporting player in different attacking scenarios</li> <li>5. defend space on their play area when under attack in a variety of scenarios</li> <li>6. participate effectively as part of a team, including communicating effectively</li> </ol>
Games-making	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. create a new game with their peers which demonstrates an understanding of the main tactics and principles of the games category being studied</li> <li>8. refine the game through a series of practices</li> <li>9. teach the new game to their peers, including refining it as necessary</li> </ol>

# 5

## Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning in senior cycle physical education. Ongoing assessment allows students to make their learning visible so that they can receive formative feedback about how to improve their participation, performance and learning. Students can receive feedback as they engage in activities such as performing, competing, organising physical activity events, preparing presentations, designing advocacy campaigns for physical activity, self- and peer-assessment, reflection, and undertaking roles other than performer. Constructive feedback can be given by their peers, their teacher and/or through the use of ICT including apps, during or following assessment events. By taking greater responsibility for their own learning students can develop the skills necessary for lifelong, self-directed participation in physical activity. Assessment also provides teachers and students with information about what students are learning, how they are learning and how teaching and learning can be planned and improved. Further information and advice on how ongoing assessment can support students' learning in physical education can be found in the NCCA Assessment Toolkit: Focus on Learning.

### Using portfolios to support assessment for learning in SCPE

The use of a portfolio provides the flexibility for learners to gather evidence of progression in their learning and performance in SCPE. As students complete different ongoing assessment activities, including reflections during and at the end of the different blocks of work, they collect different pieces of evidence of their learning in a portfolio. It is not envisaged that learners will collect evidence of all activities completed. Learners are encouraged to use different media, including photographs, video and/or audio recordings in the compilation of the portfolio. The use of ICT allows learners to work independently on their portfolios and to develop the kinds of skills that will support them in becoming self-directed learners. Portfolios can be either paper based or digital depending on the particular circumstances in the school. Further advice on the management of students' portfolios is available in Appendix A. Sample items for inclusion in a portfolio in the different blocks of work are outlined in Appendix B.

## Features of quality for the showcase portfolio

### **Achieved with merit**

All components of the portfolio are included in a well-organised fashion with a table of contents included. A variety of media is included. Items clearly represent evidence of learning for a selection of learning outcomes for this block of work. The learner displays a significant understanding of the concepts and applications involved. There is substantial evidence of a capacity to reflect on how the learning is influencing their attitudes, opinions and behaviour. The self-evaluation component is completed showing clarity of thought and insight.

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### **Achieved**

Most components of the portfolio are included. Items represent learning in some of the selected learning outcomes for this block of work. The student has gained some understanding of the concepts and attempts to apply them. There is some evidence of a capacity to reflect on how the learning is influencing their attitudes, opinions and behaviour. The self-evaluation component is completed and shows evidence of thought and careful consideration.

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### **Incomplete**

The portfolio is largely incomplete. There is little or no evidence of important learning. The student has very limited or no understanding of the concepts. There is little or no evidence of a capacity to reflect on learning. The self-evaluation component is not completed.

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It is important that learners' participation in senior cycle physical education, including the completion of the portfolio, should be formally recognised by the school in a manner which is meaningful to students.

# 6

## Appendix A:

### Management of portfolios

The school's management of SCPE portfolios will be very much context based. A method of construction—for example, folders, notebooks, hanging files, digital files—should be chosen, and how and where to store the portfolios should be determined. It is important that the location should be accessible to students. Learners should be encouraged, in whatever way is feasible, to take responsibility for the management and safe keeping of their own portfolios. The presentation of the portfolio will be agreed with the students. For example, students could submit their showcase portfolio as a display book of plastic 'poly pockets' or in digital format.



# Appendix B:

## Sample items for inclusion in a portfolio

Model	Evidence of learning	Reason for inclusion (Related learning outcome/outcomes)
Health-related physical activity	Goal-setting template and plan to improve health-related fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use their personal physical fitness results to plan and implement an effective, enjoyable and balanced fitness programme which aims to improve their health-related physical fitness</li> </ul>
Sport education	Photographs of culminating physical activity event including a video/audio reflection about the experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise a culminating event for the selected physical activity</li> <li>Reflect on their own experience of organising and participating in a culminating event from an individual and/or group perspective</li> </ul>
Contemporary issues in physical activity	Presentation about physical activity opportunities within and beyond the school including a critique of same	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critique opportunities for physical activity for students within and beyond the school</li> <li>Critique facilities for physical activity in and beyond the school from a number of perspectives including cost, attractiveness, gender, age and special needs</li> </ul>
Adventure education	Photographs/ video of adventure tasks they designed and a reflection of their experience of doing them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop their own adventure tasks including organising them for an individual or group</li> <li>Participate in individual and group adventure activities which challenge them physically, mentally and/or emotionally</li> <li>Reflect on the different adventure challenges, including consideration of how their learning might be applied in future challenges</li> </ul>
Personal and social responsibility	Evidence and reflection about their physical activity participation beyond physical education class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan to participate in physical activity outside of physical education class</li> <li>Apply their learning about taking personal and social responsibility beyond physical education class</li> </ul>
Teaching games for understanding	Video clips and/or photographs of a new game being taught to class mates: include a video/audio of a group reflection on the experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a new game with their peers which demonstrates an understanding of the main tactics and principles of the games category being studied</li> <li>Refine the game through a series of practices</li> <li>Teach the new game to their peers, including refining it as necessary</li> </ul>

# Appendix C:

## Item selection for showcase portfolio

Items for inclusion in the showcase portfolio will be generated by learners. For each of these items, learners will include a reflection on why they chose this piece of evidence and how it reflects their learning. The teacher may identify mandatory pieces for inclusion, particularly those related to the organisation of the portfolio. These pieces might include:

- a contents page
- item registry, including reasons for the selection of particular pieces of evidence
- records of participation in physical education class
- summary statements of students' learning in each unit of work; these statements could refer to the important learning for the student in the block of work, the experiences they enjoyed most and how they might apply what they had learnt in the future
- reflection on their overall experience of senior cycle physical education.

The showcase portfolio can also be compiled following a conversation between the learner and the teacher and/or the learner and their peers. Parents can also have a role in the selection of pieces for inclusion. For example, parents may be asked to select a piece for inclusion that they found particularly impressive, surprising, reflective of improvement, etc.

Learners might also be assigned a 'portfolio partner' who assists them in selecting appropriate pieces of work following conversation and collaboration. A peer might also provide some reflection on a piece of work to be included in the portfolio.

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